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College Board Writing Sample

ABSTRACT
Preparations for panel discussions at two New Jersey high schools, where college professors evaluated local student College Board Writing Samples in terms of freshman composition standards for the high school English departments, are described. Procedures for the selection of samples written by area students, selection of college professors for the panel, and conduct of the actual discussi are outlined. Remarks on panel effectiveness are included. (AF)

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1. they represented colleges—engineering, state university, small liberal arts, and teachers-liberal arts directed by the state; 2. they had had experience with freshman composition courses; 3. they had had experience with college-high school problems in teaching English. By their participation in high school-college articulation conferences, programs, and meetings these professors indicated their interest in serving on these panels.

Before the conferences a set of the five papers was mailed to each panel member. He was requested to evaluate each paper in light of the standards of freshman composition at his college. Similar sets were

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High School - College Articulation

A Practical Approach

As an outgrowth of a college-high school articulation meeting on composition sponsored by the New Jersey Association of Teachers of English at Newark College of Engineering, panel discussions were held at two New Jersey high schools —Nutley and Plainfield. These discussions may suggest one way of using to good advantage the results of the College Board Writing Samples. This account may serve as a springboard for other schools to undertake a similar project.

As most instructors of English know, the writing sample of the College Boards tried to answer an objection by several colleges that the objective composition test included in the College Boards did not completely indicate the ability of prospective college freshmen to produce clear, forceful, and adequate discussion on a college composition topic. In the writing sample, the candidate is presented at examination time with a quotation the meaning and validity of which he is asked to discuss in a 350-400 word paper. He must, therefore, analyze the quotation, develop the response, organize his reactions, and present them cogently in a brief, extempore paper. The candidate's exercise is produced in an original and several carbons. At least one of the set is returned to the candidate's high school; the others are sent at his request to the colleges he names. Leaving all estimates to the discretion of the recipient colleges, the College Board makes no judgment of the papers submitted.

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To execute this project in articulation, the high school chairmen selected five papers representing the work of students of varying achievement in high school, as indicated by their class rank at graduation. These were then rex-o-graphed—that is, typed on a spirit-process carbon and duplicated. The typing, except that it *was* typing and not handwriting, was an exact duplicate of the original paper, with all insertions, deletions, and errors retained.

Four professors from colleges near Plainfield and Nutley were then asked to serve as a panel to evaluate these papers. They were selected on the following bases:

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given at the same time to all who were to attend the conference—the members of the high school English departments, the guidance directors, and department guests. The discussions took place during the departmental meeting and lasted an hour and a half.

The high school English department felt that the discussion was rewarding for two all-inclusive reasons. First, the comments pertained specifically to their teaching and standards of marking. Although the papers were anonymous, the writers were identified at the conclusion of the meeting, and the department was able to judge the correspondence of a student's English record in high school with college standards. Secondly, the opportunity to ask specific questions of the college representatives clarified college expectations and pointed out ways in which high school students might be more relevantly prepared for college work.

Undoubtedly other schools setting up such a conference will find many points to modify and improve. The time allowed for the discussion might be lengthened, although at the end of a busy teaching day, extended conferences may lose through fatigue what they gain through completeness. Perhaps there is a better way of selecting the papers. On the other hand, there was general agreement that having the papers prepared for inspection well in advance of the conference was valuable and to do so is a technique worth retaining.

This approach of high school-college articulation is very effective because of the following reasons:

1. It brings together face to face the English instructors of high school and college.
2. It affords high school and college instructors an opportunity to see the sequential approach of the teaching of English.
3. It brings the college instructor to the high school, gives him a chance to visit it, and in some cases permits him to meet the high school instructors of his college freshman students.

No matter what changes may be suggested and adopted to improve such meetings, the high school and college staffs feel that the exchange of ideas will be of great profit as we work toward our common ends—clear, effective, thoughtful writing.

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